The Excellency of the Christian Revelation, as it proposeth to Us a Perfect Example.

A

SERMON

Preach'd in the

Cathedral Church of St. PAUL,
October the 2d. 1699.

Being the Seventh for this Year, of the LECTURE,
Founded by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

By SAMUEL BRADFORD,
Rector of St. *Mary le Bow*,
And Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON:

Printed by *Tho. Snowden*, for *Tho. Parkhurst*, at the *Bible and Three Crowns*, the lower end of *Cheapside*, near *Mercers Chapel*. 1699.

Mr. *BRADFORD's*

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UMI

1 Tim. I. xv.

This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World, to ſave Sinners, ——

IN my laſt *Lecture* upon theſe Words, I endeavoured to ſhew the Credibility of this *Saying* recommended by St. *Paul*, from the Excellency of that *Pattern*, which the Chriſtian Inſtitution propoſeth to us, in the Life of our bleſſed Saviour, this being one Part of that Method, in which *Chriſt Jeſus ſaveth Sinners*, *Viz.* That he did not only inſtruct us in the Particulars of our Duty by his *Doctrine*, but moreover hath left us an *Example* for our Imitation.

In treating on this Argument, I obſerved,

Firſt, That the very Manner of our Saviour's Appearing and Dwelling upon Earth, the External Condition and Circumſtances of his Life, whilſt he ſojourned amongſt us, were very inſtructive and examplary to us.

Secondly, That the Manner of our Saviour's Demeanor in theſe Circumſtances, his Moral Qualifications and Actions, did in an eſpecial manner exemplifie to us thoſe Virtues which we are concern'd to imitate. Under this Head, I obſerv'd,

That

I. That the Life of our Saviour was truly Humane, every way suited to the Condition of Humane Nature, as it was of God's Creation, and consequently fit to be proposed to us as our *Pattern*.

II. That it was a Life perfectly Innocent and Inoffensive.

III. That it was Remarkable, for an unusual Conjunction of the greatest Simplicity and Integrity, with an exact Prudence. Thus far I have proceeded, and now go on to what remains, *viz.* to enumerate diverse other Moral Qualifications, which were exemplified to us in an Eminent and Conspicuous Manner, in the same Life, such as these following; a genuine and substantial Piety; a large and disinterested Charity; a spotless Purity; a profound Humility; an unparallel'd Meekness, Gentleness, and Patience; and lastly, a true and sedate Courage, accompanied with an unshaken Resolution and Constancy of Mind. The Consideration of each of these will be the Business of the present *Lecture*.

IV. In the Life of our Blessed Saviour we have an Example of a genuine and substantial Piety, by which I mean a great Sense of, and Regard to Almighty God, testified by all such Expressions, as are suitable to the Nature of God, and the Relation between God and Man.

Joh. 16. 28. chap. 4. 34. Thus for Instance, as he ever profess'd that he *came from God*, and was *sent* by him; so he constantly acknowledged God in all his Ways, assuming nothing to himself, but as derived from, and depending upon

Joh. 5. 19, &c. the Father. He declared, that *the Son could do nothing of himself, but what he saw the Father do.* He ascrib'd both his Doctrine and his Works to the Father. *The*

Joh. 14. 10. *Words that I speak unto you* (saith he) *I speak not of my*

my ſelf: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works. Upon the return of the Diſciples, whom he had ſent abroad, and their giving him an Account of their Succeſs, he aſcribed it all to God, ſaying, *All things are delivered to me of my Father*; joining to this Acknowledgment, as his Cuſtom was upon other the like Occaſions, a pious and devout Ejaculation to God, lifting up his Eyes to Heaven, and owning the wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, in the Diſpenſations of his Providence, for ſo the Evangeliſt there tells us, that *Jeſus rejoyced in Spirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt revealed them unto Babes; even ſo Father, for it ſo ſeemed good in thy ſight.* Luk. 10. 21, 22.

As he diſcovered a deep Senſe of God upon his Mind, by ſuch occaſional Devotions, ſo he had alſo his Seaſons of addreſſing himſelf to his Father in more ſolemn Manner, both publickly and privately. He attended the Publick Worſhip of God in the Temple upon all ſolemn Occaſions; and *his Cuſtom was* to frequent the Synagogue on the Sabbath-Days. He frequently retired by himſelf, for the Exerciſe of a more ſecret Devotion, between God and his own Soul. Thus we often read of his withdrawing into *a Mountain*, or his *going apart* into ſome *deſart Place, to pray*; which he uſed to do either *in a Morning, riſing up a great while before Day*; or *in an Evening*, after he had ſpent the Day in Works of Charity, continuing ſometimes *a great part*, ſometimes *the whole of the Night*, in theſe Exerciſes. Very remarkable Inſtances we have of his Devotion, both in his ſolemn Prayer recorded by St. *John*, full of the moſt pious and devout Acknowledgments of God, and alſo in his Agony in the Garden, and during his ſuffering on the Croſs, when he applyed himſelf with the utmoſt intenſeneſs and fervency of Spirit to his heavenly John 2. 13, 14. chap. 5. 1. chap. 7. 10. ch. 12. 12. Luk. 4. 16. Mat. 14. 23. Luke 5. 16. Mark 1. 35. ch. 6. 46, *&c.* Luke 6. 12. John 17. Mat. 26. 39, 42, 44. ch. 27. 46, 50.

venly Father, in the time of his greatest Distress.

He always expresst a very great Regard to whatsoever was any way related to God. His *Word* he ever mentioned with the highest Respect. *Think not*, says he, *that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* His Custom was to cite *the Scriptures* upon all Occasions, both for his own Direction and Support, and for the convincing and confuting his Adversaries; and the Application he made of them was always so apposite, so close, and so clear, that his Adversaries had nothing to reply, as might be made evident in abundance of Instances.

Matth. 5. 17, 18.

In like manner, he often expreſt his Regard to *the Temple*, as to *God's House*, and altho' he told the Woman of *Samaria*, that the Worship of God was not to be long confined to *that*, or any other particular Place, yet whilst it was employed by God's Appointment in his Service, he not only attended it constantly himself, but upon two several Occasions, expreſt a very extraordinary Zeal against the Prophaners of it, rebuking them vehemently for turning *his father's House*, which had been appointed by him for *an House of prayer*, into *an House of Merchandize*, and *a Den of Thieves*.

John 4.21.

John 2.16. 17.

Matth. 21. 12, 13.

All the *Institutions* of God were likewise Sacred to him. As in his state of Infancy, *all things* relating to him were, by the Piety of *Joseph* and *Mary*, *performed according to the Law of the Lord*; so when he was grown up to Man's Estate, he did for himself *fulfil all Righteousness*. For as much as *John's Baptism* was *from Heaven*, he freely offered himself to be baptized by him, though (as St. *John* intimates) he was far from *needing* it. He was *made under the Law*, and therefore readily submitted

Luke 2.39.

Mat. 3. 15.

Gal. 4 4.

ted to it. He attended at the ſeveral Feſtivals, according to its Appointment; he eat the Paſſover with his Diſciples; he obſerved the Sabbath, tho' not with a Phariſaical Superſtition, yet according to the True Deſign of the Inſtitution; he admoniſhed thoſe whom he healed of the Leproſie *to offer the Gifts which* Moſes *commanded.* Matth 8. 4. Luke 5. 14. He attended at the Synagogue-Service, according to the Direction of the Governours of the Jewiſh Church, and the laudable Practice of the Nation.

He ever maintained a firm Faith and Truſt in God, (one of the chief Inſtances of a Solid Piety, and the Root of all other Virtues.) Not to mention his Miraculous Works, which were all wrought by Faith in the Power of the Almighty; his whole Life, from the beginning to the end, was ſpent in a conſtant Dependence upon a ſpecial Providence, eſpecially during the time of his Publick Miniſtry, when he went about doing the Work which was appointed him, and committing himſelf entirely to the Care of him who had ſent him. Mat. 17. 20. John 11. 41, 42. It may ſeem too ſmall an Inſtance to inſiſt upon, *that* of his Unconcernedneſs in a Storm, when the Veſſel he was in was *covered with the Waves*, and his Diſciples apprehended themſelves in danger of *periſhing*; ſeeing he reproves his Diſciples, as having but *little Faith* upon that Occaſion. Mat. 8. 23. We have indeed far higher Inſtances of his Faith in God, under much greater Trials, both when his Sufferings were approaching, and when he was actually under them. When his Diſciples diſcovered their unwillingneſs to go into *Judea*, as apprehending the Danger he would be expoſed to there, he tells them what was the Principle upon which he acted; *Are there not* (ſays he) *twelve Hours in the Day? If any Man walk in the Day, he ſtumbleth not, becauſe he ſees the Light of this World*, &c. As if he had ſaid, Whatſoever dangers might threaten him, he could ſafely com- John 11. 8, 9, 10.

mit himself to the Divine Protection, which would certainly preserve him till he had finished his Work. In his Discourse with his Disciples, a little before he was apprehended, as he gives many Instances of his Faith,
Joh. 16 32. so particularly in those Words, *Behold, the Hour cometh, yea, is now come, when ye shall leave me alone: yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.* When his Enemies had seized him, and upon that occasion *Peter* drew his Sword, our Lord rebuked his irregular Zeal, by declaring his belief, that he could have obtained an
Matth. 26. 53, 54. Army of Angels to rescue him, had it been a thing fit for him to ask, or for God to grant. When he hung upon the Cross, he comforted the Penitent Thief, by
Luk. 23 43. assuring him, that *he should be that Day with him in Paradise.* In the midst of his most grievous and pathetical Complaint, he still gave evidence of his Faith, by
Mat. 27. 46. calling God *his God* twice in the same Breath; and presently after expir'd, with an Expression full of Trust
Luk 23 46. in God, saying, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.*

In Virtue of this Faith, he always made the Glory of God his great End. He could truly profess to the Jews,
Joh. 7 18. ch. 8. 49, 50. that *he sought not his own Glory; but the Glory of him that sent him*; which he did both living and dying; and therefore could say to his Father, when he was going
Joh. 17. 1, 4. to offer himself upon the Cross, *Father, the Hour is come; glorifie thy Son, that thy Son also may glorifie Thee. I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the Work which thou gavest me to do.*

This indeed is the true Way of glorifying God, by yielding, as our Saviour had done, a ready, a diligent,
Joh. 8. 29. and a constant Obedience to his Will. *He always did those things, which pleased God,* and this, not as we are apt to do, with Reluctancy; No, it was *his Meat,*
Joh 4. 34. the pleasure of his Life, *to do the Will of God, and to finish*

finiſh his Work. Nor was his Diligence leſs remarkable than his Willingneſs. *In the Day-time he was teaching in the Temple, whither the People came early in the Morning to hear him,* and he uſually ſpent the whole Day, either in inſtructing the Minds, or healing the Bodies of Men. Luke 21. 37, 38.

Nor did he teſtifie his Piety only by Doing; but, which is yet more difficult, by ſubmitting in all Caſes to the VVill of his heavenly Father. His coming into the VVorld, his appearing in ſuch mean Circumſtances, eſpecially his ſuffering ſo many hard things both living and dying, were ſufficient Evidences of an entire Reſignation of his own VVill to the VVill of God. VVhen he ſpake of his approaching Sufferings, *Now* (ſaith he) *is my Soul troubled, and what ſhall I ſay? Father, ſave me from this Hour: But for this Cauſe came I to this Hour. Father, glorifie thy Name.* How full of devout Submiſſion was his Prayer in his Agony, when his *Soul* was ſeized with *amazement* and *anguiſh*, when it was *exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death*, when the *anguiſh* of his Spirit cauſed him *to ſweat as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground*, when he had all the Senſe of, and felt all the Reluctancy to his Sufferings, which innocent Humane Nature was capable of, *falling on his face*, and *ſaying, O my father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt*, repeating *the ſame Words* a *ſecond*, and a *third time!* The ſame reſigned Temper he again teſtified to *Peter*, when he ſaid, *The Cup which my father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?* John 12. 27, 28. Mar. 14. 33, 34. Luk. 22. 44. Mat. 26. 39. Joh. 18. 11.

And hereby all the Reluctancy of his Humane Nature is juſtified, as perfectly innocent and blameleſs; ſince as it was no more than what was truly Natural and Humane, ſo it was accompanied with an entire Reſignation to the Divine Will. For this is all that

God doth or can require of a Creature, not to desire, not to be fond of Sufferings, nay, not to be insensible of them, or unaffected with them; but if it be his will to inflict them, willingly to submit to, and acquiesce in his disposal. 'Tis this indeed which renders Submission a Virtue, that in exercising it, our wills are resigned to God's; and it was this, which exceedingly inhanced the Virtue of our Saviour's Submission, that he appears to have had so quick and tender a Sense both of his approaching and present Sufferings, and yet submitted. His Nature recoyled, but did not rebel. His Will, if it had been fit, would have chosen otherwise; but not being so, it yielded.

To conclude this Head; Our Saviour's Piety appeared, in his making it his Business to excite the same Disposition in others. This was the Design of his Publick Preaching, and of his more private Conversation, to instruct Men in the Knowledge of God and his Will, and to perswade them to a suitable Practice; to which purpose he laid hold of every Oportunity and Occasion of discoursing to those that were with him, on Divine and Spiritual Subjects, as will appear in abundance of Instances to any one who carefully peruses the Evangelists; such a sense had he of God and Divine Things upon his Mind, that *out of the abundance of his Heart, his Mouth* was always thus *speaking*.

Joh. 4. 10. chap 6. 27. Luke 10. 41, 42. ch. 11. 27. ch. 14. 3, 7, 12, 15, 16.

V. There was further exemplified to us, in the Life of our blessed Saviour, a large and disinterested Charity.

His Piety and Charity were in Truth so intermixed, that the very same Instances may be very often produced for both, he having made, as we should do, his Love

Love to Men the Effect and Proof of his Love to God, and the Acts of his Obedience being for the most part so many Instances of Beneficence also.

Charity was the Motive; and the Exercise of it, the great Design of his coming into the World. *This is* that *faithful Saying*, recorded in our Text, *that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners.* And whilst he was in the World, his Business was, *to go about doing good.* It was his daily Employment, throughout the Course of his Publick Ministry, to do good to the Souls and Bodies of Men. Thus the Evangelist tells us, *Jesus went about all the Cities and Villages, teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every Sickness, and every Disease among the People.* Acts 10. 38. Mat. 9. 35.

He spent his time, as appears by the Account the Evangelists give us throughout their History, in instructing the Ignorant, reproving the Guilty, inviting Sinners to Repentance, encouraging the Penitent, and restoring Health and Strength to the Diseased and Infirm.

I mention the Cures he wrought, because it is impossible to represent the Life of our Saviour truly, without taking Notice of those Actions, which filled up so considerable a part of his Life, and consequently of his History, and which were indeed so notorious, as that the Jews themselves, together with the most Learned of the Ancient Infidels among the Pagans, such as *Julian* and *Celsus*, acknowledged them, tho' they did not own the Power by which he did them. However, I insist not now upon the miraculous Power by which he wrought his Cures; but only upon the Charity which he exercised therein, all the Miracles, which are ascribed to him, being also so many Instances of Kindness and Beneficence.

More-

Moreover, he did good, like his heavenly Father, to all sorts of Men, *to the Evil and to the good.* He did not despise or overlook any for their Poverty, or the Meanness of their Condition; nay, for their Ignorance, or their past Faults, if they were but willing to be instructed, and to amend for the future. He conversed with the worst of Men; both those that were esteem'd so, and those that really were so, as a Physician with his Patients, in order to the curing their Spiritual Diseases. He particularly encouraged repenting Sinners,
Luk 19. 10 declaring often, that *he came to seek and to save that which was lost.* He applied himself first indeed to *the lost*
Mat. 15. 24. *Sheep of the House of Israel*: But to shew that he did not intend to confine his Charity to the *Jews* only, he
verse 22. extended it to the *Samaritans*, and to the *Gentiles* also,
John 4. 10, 40. as there was occasion offered.

He readily laid hold of every Oportunity of being kind and useful, nay, he sought Oportunities that he might be so. He kindly received those who came to
Joh 3. 1 &c him privately for Information; nor do we ever read, that he refused to give either Instruction or Relief to any one that seriously asked it of him. He did indeed at
Matth. 15. 24, &c. the first seem to deny the Woman of *Canaan*; but, as it appears, it was only to try her, and thereby to have an occasion of doing what was most grateful to him, commending and encouraging her Faith. When
Luk. 9. 10, 11, 12, 13. he was willing to retire, yet if the People followed and prest upon him, his Compassion moved him to entertain them kindly, to teach, to heal, and to feed them.

Nay, he did not always stay till he was ask'd; but often prevented the miserable, and sav'd them the trouble of petitioning, by kindly offering his Assistance, whenever he beheld a compassionable Object. When
Joh. 5. 6, 7. he beheld a poor Man lying at the Pool of *Bethesda*, infirm and helpless, knowing that he had laboured under

under his Infirmity many Years, and had waited there a long time in vain, he asked him, *Whether he would be made whole?* and immediately reſtored his Strength to him; and again *finding him* a little after *in the Temple*, he made his firſt Kindneſs the Occaſion of a ſecond and a greater favour, admoniſhing him to improve the Bleſſing he had received: *Behold!* ſaith he, *thou art made whole; ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee.* verſe 14.

His raiſing *the Widow's Son*, was another Inſtance of the ſame kind, when his Goodneſs moved him to ſurprize the ſorrowful Mother with an unexpected Favour. Luk 7. 13.

Moreover, Whatſoever good he did, he did it freely, having no other Reward but the Satisfaction of doing it. Nay, he perſevered in doing good, in ſpight of all the many Provocations he met with to the contrary. He did, as his Goſpel hath obliged his Diſciples, Good for Evil. Even when his Enemies exerciſed the utmoſt of their Malice and Fury againſt him, he ceaſed not to pity and to pray for them. How pathetically did he expreſs himſelf towards *Jeruſalem*, a little before his Suffering, declaring the deſire he had, and the Pains he had taken to prevent its ruin! *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem! How often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not!* Even when he was nailed to the Croſs, and felt the worſt that they could do to him, he made the beſt Apology for them, that Charity could invent, with his dying Breath recommending thoſe that crucified him, to the Mercy of God. Nay, he died for them, who thus uſed him, as well as for the reſt of Mankind, who had grievouſly offended both his Father and him. And *herein was Love*, the greateſt that ever any other Man could be ſuppos'd to have for his very beſt *Friend*; but *Jeſus* exercis'd it towards his *Enemies*, towards *ungodly* Men and *Sinners*, after which Mat. 23. 37. Luk. 23. 34. Joh. 15. 13. Rom 5. 6, 8, 10.

which I need not, nay, I cannot add any thing, whereby to set forth the unbounded and disinterested Charity of our Saviour. I proceed therefore to consider,

VI. That spotless Purity, in which also our Lord made himself an Example to Men; by which I mean, that his Soul was not in the least defiled by dwelling in a Body of Flesh, nor corrupted by conversing with material and sensible Objects; but the reasonable and the divine Life prevail'd and triumph'd over the Animal.

They were but few of the Pleasures of Sense which he vouchsafed to partake of, and those also very sparingly. He was so wholly taken up with the Works of Piety and Charity above-mention'd, as to shew no other Regard for his Body, than what was absolutely necessary for the rendring it serviceable to his Mind, very often neglecting it, and denying it even its innocent and lawful Refreshments, whilst he was busie in the Affairs of his great Employment. He was frequently expos'd to hunger, and thirst, and wearinefs, whilst he went about preaching the Gospel, and administring Help to the Needy. *He had not* sometimes *leisure to eat his Bread*, nor was he solicitous about it, *having*, as he told his Disciples, *Meat to eat, which they knew not of.* He refus'd not indeed, when invited, to be present at Entertainments, and sometimes accepted the Respect of being anointed with costly Oyntment; but in neither of these Instances was there any thing justly liable to censure. He always made the Entertainment an Oportunity, not only of obliging such as invited him, but moreover of discoursing piously and usefully to the Company there present, of which

Mark 3.20. Joh. 4.6,7, 31, 32, 34.

we

we have diverſe remarkable Inſtances. In permitting himſelf to be anointed with a very coſtly Ointment (which ſeems to have been upon two diſtinct Occaſions, and by two ſeveral Perſons) he allow'd in both Inſtances a Reſpect to be paid to him, which was juſtly due, and very ſeaſonably paid; and in one of them particularly an Occaſion to be given for recording the Repentance and the Gratitudue of a reclaimed Sinner, as an Example and Encouragement to future Generations. Luk. 5. 29, chap. 14. 3, &c. chap. 19. 9, &c. Mat. 26. 6. Joh. 12. 3 Luke 7. 37.

Our Lord did not indeed withdraw from the World, as I have already obſerv'd, that he might place himſelf out of the reach of ſenſible Objects, by which Men are ſo apt to be enſnared; nor did he, that we read of, uſe any unnatural and uncouth Methods for mortifying the Fleſh, nor exerciſe any of thoſe fooliſh Auſterities, for which ſome fanciful Religioniſts have been famous; (all which in Truth looks either like a cowardly forſaking the Station which Providence hath aſſign'd us, in order to keep out of harms way, doing little or no good, in order to the doing no evil; or elſe like a vain Ambition to appear ſingular and extraordinary; or ſeems at the beſt but the reſult of Ignorance and Superſtition:) but he preſerv'd himſelf innocent and pure, (as we ought to do) in Ways and Methods ſuitable to the Condition of Humane Nature, and the Deſign of this preſent Life, always keeping his Body in that perfect Subjection to his Spirit, that it might be a ready Inſtrument either in doing or ſuffering the Will of God. And therefore, when by God's Will he was expoſed not only to the more tolerable Inconveniencies and Hardſhips of Life, but to very grievous Sufferings alſo, *he was not re-* Iſa. 50. 5, 6.

bellious, as the Prophet speaks in his Name, *neither turned he away back: but gave his back to the Smiters, and his Cheeks to them that pluck'd off the Hair; he hid not his Face from shame and spitting.* As he had subdued his Flesh before, so then *he suffered in it*, instructing us thereby *to arm our selves with the same Mind, ceasing from sin*, and *living the rest of our time in the Flesh, not to the Lusts of Men, but to the Will of God.*

1 Pet. 4. 1, 2.

VII. The next Instance I named, in which our blessed Saviour became an Example to us, was his profound Humility.

I have already observ'd, That his voluntary assuming our Nature, and submitting to all the Circumstances with which his Incarnation was attended, were Instances of a wonderful Condescension; as likewise that in the more private part of his Life, he was an eminent Pattern of Humility: and when he took upon him his Publick Employment, notwithstanding the real Dignity of his Person, and the singular Nature of his Commission, yet his Temper and his Carriage were not alter'd. He took no worldly State upon him. He chose for his immediate Attendants, Men of the meanest Rank and Education. He ever declin'd the Offers of Secular Power and Honor. When he once accepted the Respect and Applauses of the People, it was, as the Evangelist observes, from *the Multitudes*, and as himself expresses it, *out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings*, and this too not till he knew that the time of his leaving this World drew near. He *honour'd his Father*, as he told the Jews, *not seeking his own Glory*; so far from that, that he liv'd in those Circumstances,

John 6. 15.

Matth. 21. 9, 16.

John 8. 49, 50.

ces, and continually did those things, which he certainly knew would, though unreasonably, cause him to be despis'd by that evil Generation, sacrificing his very Reputation to the Honour of God, and the Benefit of Mankind. When one call'd him, *good* *Master*, he replied, that *no one was good, but God*; not thereby denying himself to be *good*, or that he was really *God*; but making this Reply to one that spake to him in the Style, which the Jews us'd towards their Doctors, looking upon him as a meer Man, according to the Form, which he had taken upon him. He complied, as I took Notice before, with Institutions which he had no need of, that he might be an Example to others. He condescended to converse with the meanest, and the worst of Men, that he might be useful to them. He made a general and an earnest Invitation to Sinners, to come to him, if they were but touch'd with a Sense of their Sins, and were desirous to be deliver'd from the Burden of them, assuring them for their Encouragement, that he was *lowly in Heart*. His Disciples *marvelled*, when they saw him talking with *the Woman of Samaria*, which he readily condescended to do for her Instruction. He took great Notice, as I have observ'd, of the *young Children* which were presented to him, and testified an especial Regard to all such as should be found like to them, in simplicity and humility of Temper, however little and inconsiderable they might appear in the Eyes of the World. He declar'd, that *whosoever should do the Will of his heavenly Father*, without any regard to his Quality or Circumstances in the World, was to him as his *his Brother, his Sister, and his Mother*. Towards his Disciples he carried it not only as *a Brother*

Mat. 19. 17.

Matth. 11. 28, 29.

John 4. 27.

Mat. 19. 13. *ch.* 18. 2, &c

Mat. 12. 48.

Luk. 22. 27.

and *a Friend*, but sometimes also as *a Servant*. Nay, a little before he left th m, he took the Habit of a
John 13. 4, &c. Servant upon him, and *wash'd their Feet*, telling them, that *he*, their *Lord and Master*, did this, to give them an Example, that they might do likewise. And again elsewhere, proposing himself as
Matth. 20. 26, 27, 28. their Pattern, he declar'd, that *the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give his Life a ransom for many*. And this indeed was the greatest Expression and Testimony of Humility, that was possible, that after having liv'd an humble and a despis'd Life, he should submit to an accursed death, attended with the most ignominious Circumstances; that he not only *endur'd* the pain
Heb. 12. 2. of *the Cross*, but *despis'd the shame* also; that as he had *made himself of no Reputation*, by *taking upon him the form of a Servant, being made in the likeness of Men*; so *being found in fashion as a Man*, he yet farther *humbled himself* to the very lowest degree, *becoming obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross*.

VIII. The next Instance I nam'd was our blessed Saviour's great Meekness and Gentleness towards all sorts of Men.

This was the Natural Effect of his Humility, and therefore he joins his *Meekness* and *Lowliness in*
Mat 11. 29. *Heart*, when he invites and encourages Sinners to
ch. 12. 19. 20. come to him. It is cited by St. *Matthew* as a Prophecy which related to him, and which he exactly fulfill'd, that *he should not strive nor cry, neither should any Man hear his Voice in the Streets; a bruised Reed he should not break, nor quench the smoaking Flax*, importing, that by his meek and gentle behaviour he should

ſhould encourage & ſtrengthen the humble & weak-hearted. He calls himſelf, for the ſame reaſon, *the Good Shepherd*, becauſe of his tender Care towards ſuch, as ſhould come under his ſpecial Conduct. Accordingly he manag'd his Diſciples with great tenderneſs, inſtructing them (as I have obſerv'd) as they were able to receive Inſtruction; bearing with their Ignorance, and Indiſpoſedneſs to underſtand and remember what he ſaid to them; reproving them faithfully, but in moſt friendly manner, uſually in ſuch ſoft Terms as theſe, *Do ye not yet underſtand, neither remember? Why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith?* Nay, when in the time of his Agony he had deſir'd three of them to watch with him, and they ſuffer'd themſelves to be overtaken with Sleep, he only ſaid, applying himſelf particularly to *Peter*, who had expreſt the greateſt Confidence, *What, could ye not watch with me one Hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing: but the Fleſh is weak.*

Joh. 10. 14.

Mat. 16. 9. ch. 8 26

Mat. 26. 40, 41.

But his Meekneſs appear'd moſt eminently in his Carriage towards his Enemies, whilſt *he endured the Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf.* When the *Phariſees*, the worſt of Men, reproached and upbraided him for his good Works, accuſing him as a prophane and looſe Man, nay, as an Impoſtor, and a Magician, he often condeſcended to argue the Caſe with them, giving them unanſwerable Arguments, and very mild Words, in his own Vindication, in order, if poſſible, to have ſatisfied and convinc'd them,

Heb. 12. 3.

Mat. 9. 3, 11 ch 12. 3, 11, 24.

of

of which we have diverse observable Instances in the Evangelists.

'Tis true, he did sometimes take another Course with these Men, accusing and upbraiding them in a very severe manner, telling them they were *Hypocrites*, *Fools and blind*, *an evil and an adulterous Generation*, *Serpents*, and a *Generation of Vipers*, and finally *Children of the Devil*, which may seem an Objection against the Meekness of his Temper and Behaviour. But if the Matter be throughly considered, this admits of a very fair Account, and such as is altogether consistent with what I have said upon this Head.

Mat. 23. 13, 17, 33. Mat. 12. 39. Joh. 8. 44.

Supposing the Scribes and Pharisees to have been of such a Temper as the History of the Evangelists represents them (of which there can be no reason to doubt) there's nothing said of them by our Saviour, but what was strictly true. Malice and Hypocrisie mixt together make the very worst Constitution, that humane Nature is capable of, which cannot be better represented, than by resembling it to that of venemous Creatures, or accursed Spirits, and is in truth so exquisitely bad, that hardly any thing bad enough can be said of it. 'Tis true, after all this, it might not have become every private Man to have told them the truth so openly, and so plainly; and that partly for want of a certain Knowledge of the inward Temper and Disposition of others; and partly for want of a special Authority to rebuke all sorts of Sinners with freedom: but our blessed Saviour, who, as we believe, thorowly knew the Hearts of Men, and was come

come into the World with a ſpecial and extraordinary Commiſſion from God, might well be allow'd, to tell them their own, in the plaineſt Terms. *John* the Baptiſt, by Virtue of a Divine Commiſſion, did the like; and much more might He, whom St. *John* acknowledged to be ſo much *Greater* than himſelf, do it. Eſpecially if we add, That he had taken the gentler Courſe firſt, mildly arguing with them, with Great Strength of Reaſon, as I have already obſerved. Matth. 3. 7.

To conclude this Particular; Our Saviour's Meekneſs was then moſt Conſpicuous, when he met with the utmoſt perſonal Provocations: When one of his own Diſciples vilely betray'd him, upon his approaching to give him the traiterous Kiſs, he ſaid no more, but *Friend, Wherefore art thou come?* And again, *Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs?* To *the Chief Prieſts, and Captains, and Elders*, that came with *Judas*, he addreſs'd himſelf in this mild Language, *Be ye come out as againſt a Thief, with Swords and Staves? When I was daily with you in the Temple, ye ſtretched forth no Hands againſt me: but this is your Hour, and the Power of Darkneſs.* Not one paſſionate or indecent Expreſſion in all this; nor when he was preſently after brought upon his Tryal; nor under his Sufferings themſelves. But that leads me to another Inſtance, nearly allyed to this of Meekneſs, *Viz.* Mat. 26. 50. Luke 22. 48, 52, 53.

The

IX. The Great Patience of our Lord, under the sharpest Sufferings of various kinds.

That he quietly underwent many Inconveniencies and Hardships, through the Course of a mean and poor Life, may be rather call'd Contentedness than Patience; that he bore with the Weakness of his Friends, and the perverseness of his Enemies, during the space of his Publick Ministry, may be properly reduc'd to the last Head of Meekness; but his Patience appear'd in his quietly susteining those severe Sufferings which befel him, both immediately before, and at his Crucifixion, during all which time, it is observable, that not one froward or impatient word proceeded out of his Mouth. When he stood before the Council, and they laid many grievous things to his Charge, which he knew
Mat.26.63. to be false, *he held his peace.* When an Officer insolently stroke him, without any Order from the
Joh 18.23. Council, he only said, *If I have spoken evil; bear witness of the evil: But if well; why smitest thou me?*
Matth. 27. 26, &c. When *Pilate* order'd him to be *scourged* and when the Soldiers *spit upon him, mockt him*, and abused him in diverse rude and insolent Ways, his Pati-
Act. 8. 32. ence was still invincible. *He was* after all *led as a Sheep to the slaughter, and like a Lamb dumb before his Shearer, so opened he not his Mouth.* Upon the
Mat.27.46. Psal. 22. 1. Cross indeed he once complain'd; but it was in the Words of a Prophetick Psalm, indited long before, for that very purpose, making his humble Application to GOD, as to One in whom he knew he had a sure Interest, notwithstanding the

the Severity of his Sufferings, in which Confidence he immediately after reſigned his Spirit to him. Luk. 23. 45.

And that which render'd this Patience of our Lord ſtill the more conſiderable was, that he was all this while conſcious of Perfect Innocency, and very ſenſible of the Injury done him by thoſe who inflicted theſe Sufferings upon him. To this purpoſe St. *Peter* argues in this very Caſe, propoſing our Lord, as a Pattern to us herein. *This*, (ſays he) *is thank-worthy, if a Man for Conſcience toward God endure Grief, ſuffering wrongfully. For what Glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults, ye take it patiently? But if, when ye do well and ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffer'd for us, leaving us an Example, that ye ſhould follow his Steps; Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his Mouth; Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffer'd, he threatned not; but committed himſelf to Him who judgeth righteouſly.* 1 Pet. 2. 19, &c.

I come now to the laſt Inſtance I mention'd, wherein our bleſſed Saviour became our Example, and that was in a True and Sedate Courage, teſtified by an unſhaken Reſolution and Conſtancy of Mind. X.

Having fix'd his End, he purſued it reſolutely, upon all Occaſions bearing up againſt whatſoever Temptation or Oppoſition he met with in his way.

I might begin with the Conſtancy which he ſhew'd in reſiſting the Temptation of the Devil, when he aſſaulted him by ſeveral different Methods, at his ſetting out upon his great Work; which to thoſe who are his Diſciples, is a Pattern to inſtruct and encourage them, in withſtanding all the Attempts of their Spiritual and Inviſible Enemy: But I rather chuſe to take Notice of his Conſtancy in reſiſting and overcoming all the Temptations he met with from Men, of which we have many Inſtances, which cannot be denyed by our Adverſaries themſelves.

Matth. 4. 1, &c.

To this purpoſe 'tis obſervable, that he was neither affected with the Applauſes, nor impoſed upon by the Pretences, nor diſcouraged by the Reproaches and Threatnings of thoſe he had to do with. Sometimes nothing would ſatisfie the People, but to ſet him up immediately for a King; but, becauſe he knew this was not agreeable to the deſign of his coming, he declin'd the Offer At other times, his Enemies would ſpeak him fair, in order to betray him: But he diſcerned their *Hypocriſie* and *Wickedneſs*, and would give them no Advantage againſt him. For the moſt part they diſcovered their Hatred to him very openly, ſo that he knew that he went in danger of his

Joh. 6. 15.

Mat. 22. 18.

his Life amongſt them: but neither did this deter him from purſuing his great Deſign. He withdrew indeed upon Occaſion from one Place to another, to avoid their Fury: but he never deſerted his Work, or neglected the leaſt part of his Duty from fear; but was always employ'd in the great Buſineſs of his High Calling, whereſoever he went. If an Occaſion of exerciſing his Charity offer'd it ſelf, though upon a Sabbath-Day, and in the Preſence of the *Phariſees*, yet he laid hold of it, and did the thing which he certainly knew they would lay to his Charge, as a Crime. He would upon all fair Occaſions juſtifie himſelf to their Faces, owning who he was, in ſuch Terms as they underſtood well enough. He very often diſcours'd with his Diſciples of his Sufferings, as what he certainly foreknew and expected; and when *Peter* would have tempted him to ſpare himſelf, he rebuked him more ſharply upon that, than ever he did upon any other Occaſion. When any of the Feſtivals requir'd his Preſence at *Jeruſalem*, he went thither, tho' he knew that *they ſought his Life*; nay, he went to *the Temple*, and taught publickly in the midſt of their moſt ſolemn Aſſemblies, ſo that ſome of them ſaid upon that Occaſion, *Is not this he, whom the Jews ſeek to kill? But lo, he ſpeaketh boldly, and they ſay nothing to him! Do the Rulers know indeed, that this is the very Chriſt?* But moſt remarkably did he do this at his laſt Paſſover, when his Diſciples, apprehenſive of the *Jews* Deſigns againſt him, would have deterr'd him from going up, but could not prevail. As he was going up with

Mat. 14. 13. Joh. 11. 54.

Mat. 12. 10.

John 5. 32, &c. ch. 10. 24, 25, &c.

Mat. 16. 23.

Joh. 7. 7, 10 14, 25, 26.

Joh. 11. 7, 8, 9.

Mat. 20. 18, 19. them; he told them, plainly and very particularly, the Things which should befal him at *Jerusalem*; yet he enter'd into the City in a more Joh. 12, 12. Publick and Solemn Manner, than he had ever done before; and altho' he went in the Evenings Mat. 21. 17, 18. to lodge at *Bethany*, yet he return'd in the Morning to *Jerusalem*, where he continued to converse freely and openly, till he was apprehended.

A little before he was seiz'd, he entertained a long and particular Discourse with his Disc- Joh. 13. 14. 15. 16. ch. ples, taking his solemn Leave of them, and instructing and comforting them, with Respect to his Absence from them. When his Discourse was finish'd, and he had recommended himself and chap. 17. them to God by Prayer, he went with them directly to the Garden, there expecting the Traitor Joh. 18. 1, 2 *Judas*, who *knew the Place*, as being that to which *Jesus was wont to resort with his Disciples*. When ver. 7, 8, 9. he was come thither, he met the Officers that were sent to take him, and told them, that He was the Person whom they look'd for, by that means giving his Disciples an Oportunity to make their Escape. When he was brought first Mat. 26. 63, 64, 65. before the *Chief Priest* and *Council*, and after- ch. 27. 11. wards before *Pilate*, he was so far from a cow- 1 Tim. 6. 13 ardly Tergiversation, that with great Resolution and Constancy of Mind, he own'd himself to be what he was, and when they wanted Evidence to convict him, gave them an Oportunity of doing it out of his own Mouth, *witnessing*, as St. *Paul* expresses it, *a good Confession*.

And

And as the certain and near Proſpect of his Sufferings could not diſcourage him from thus going on, to meet and face them; ſo neither did the feeling of them, when they were the moſt ſharp and ſevere, weaken his Reſolution, or break the firmneſs of his Spirit.

'Tis true, that both in his Agony in the Garden (as I before obſerv'd) and likewiſe whilſt he was upon the Croſs, he diſcover'd a very quick Senſe of his Sufferings, and ſuch as ſome of the Adverſaries of Chriſtianity have urged as a plauſible Argument, that our Saviour wanted that Courage and Firmneſs of Spirit, which I have aſcribed to him. But in this they betray as much Ignorance as Malice, and plainly ſhew that they not only are deſtitute of a Spiritual and Divine Senſe, but that they want alſo a juſt Idea of the Frame of Humane Nature.

The *Virtue* of *Courage* cannot conſiſt in the Strength and Vigor of the Animal Spirits; nor in an obſtinate Reſolution not to complain, or ſeem at all ſenſible of Sufferings. On the contrary the moſt excellent Conſtitution, particularly to the Purpoſes of Virtue and Piety, is undoubtedly that which is moſt tender and ſenſible; and ſuch a Conſtitution we may therefore reaſonably preſume our Saviour's to have been, which as it would neceſſarily occaſion a very quick Senſe both of the Pain and the Ignominy he was expoſed to, ſo there was in his Caſe alſo a Concurrence

currence of many other Circumstances, whereby this Sense would be heighten'd. He, whom we Christians believe to have been the Son of God, and to have suffered for the Sins of Men, in order to the making Expiation for them, must necessarily have had a deep Sense of the Displeasure of his heavenly Father, on Account of the Apostacy of Mankind; as also of the heinous Evil of Sin, and all the Misery to which it had expos'd the Children of Men. He must have been farther strongly affected with the disingenuity and baseness of those Men by whom he was thus vilely and cruelly treated, and from thence considered the Difficulty of recovering Sinners to God, and the Misery to which a great Part of Mankind would through their own Perverseness still expose themselves, notwithstanding all he did and suffered for them. He was wise and good enough, possess'd with such an ardent Love both to God and Man, as to be deeply touch'd with these and many other such like Apprehensions, which may not perhaps duly affect us, through our Ignorance, inconsiderateness and narrowness of Spirit. And after all, he might be left by God to feel as much from all these Circumstances concurring, as innocent Humane Nature is capable of feeling, that by this Means his Sufferings might be so much the more considerable and valuabe, to the Ends for which they were designed. And I doubt not, but whosoever has good Nature and Religion enough to be in any measure touch'd with these Considerations, will readily acknowledge, that as our Saviour's Sufferings were much greater than those

thoſe of any other Man upon Earth, ſo his Senſe of them was very well conſiſtent with True Courage and Firmneſs of Spirit; ſince notwithſtanding all their aggravating Circumſtances, he perſiſted to the laſt in a ſubmiſſive Reſignation of himſelf to the Will of God.

To conclude this Particular; As from the beginning of his Sufferings to the end, he utter'd nothing unbecoming his Character, ſo whilſt he hung upon the Croſs, and his Pain and Grief muſt be ſuppoſed moſt exquiſite, he ſaid diverſe things, which ſhewed both the Clearneſs of his Apprehenſion, and the firmneſs of his Mind at that time. He expreſt a tender Regard to his Mother, the bleſſed Virgin, committing her to the Care of his beloved Diſciple; he kindly apologized and pray'd for his Enemies; he comforted the Penitent Malefactor; and when he knew that all things were accompliſhed, ſaving one Prophecy, of their *giving him Vinegar to drink*, he gave an Occaſion for offering it, and when he had received it, he declared, that *it was finiſhed*, and *commending his Spirit to his heavenly Father, he bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghoſt*, remaining thus conſtant and unalterable to the laſt, and conquering even by dying.

Joh. 19. 25. Luk. 23. 34, 42. Joh. 19. 28, 29, 30.

And thus I have gone through what I propoſed, briefly pointing at ſeveral Inſtances, in which our bleſſed Saviour hath given us an *Example*, and of which the Evangeliſts have given us a more full and particular Narrative; whoſe Writings upon this Account deſerve our moſt ſerious and impartial peruſual, as deſcribing to us, in a plain, ſimple, and unaffected Style, a Life to which there is nothing comparable:

parable, in the most learned and renowned Historians; a Life which none but *the Son of God* could have lived, and which none but those who conversed with him, or were endued in some measure with his Spirit, could have written, as the Evangelists have done. Had our Saviour been no greater a Person, than the Adversaries of Christianity suppose him; and had the Evangelists been furnish'd with no greater Abilities than their Education had given them, we could not possibly have had from them, such fair Characters of True Goodness, of Solid Piety and Virtue of all Kinds, without the least Defect or Mixture, as we read in the Gospels.

I shall conclude this Discourse with admonishing my self, and all that hear me, of the mighty Obligation this Example lays upon all the professed Disciples of *Jesus*. It is the Example of him whom we call *our Lord and Master*, who took our Nature upon him, that he might not only teach, but shew us how to live, and who hath engaged us in the highest manner, by living and dying for our sakes 'Tis, in a word, the Example of *God*, when he became *Man*, that he might restore us to the Image and the Favour of God.

Then, and then only shall we represent him truly to the World, when we become like to him in our Tempers and our Practices; by this Means we may hope to convince Unbelievers, and to procure that Esteem and Honour to the Name of our Lord, which is due from all Mankind.

FINIS.